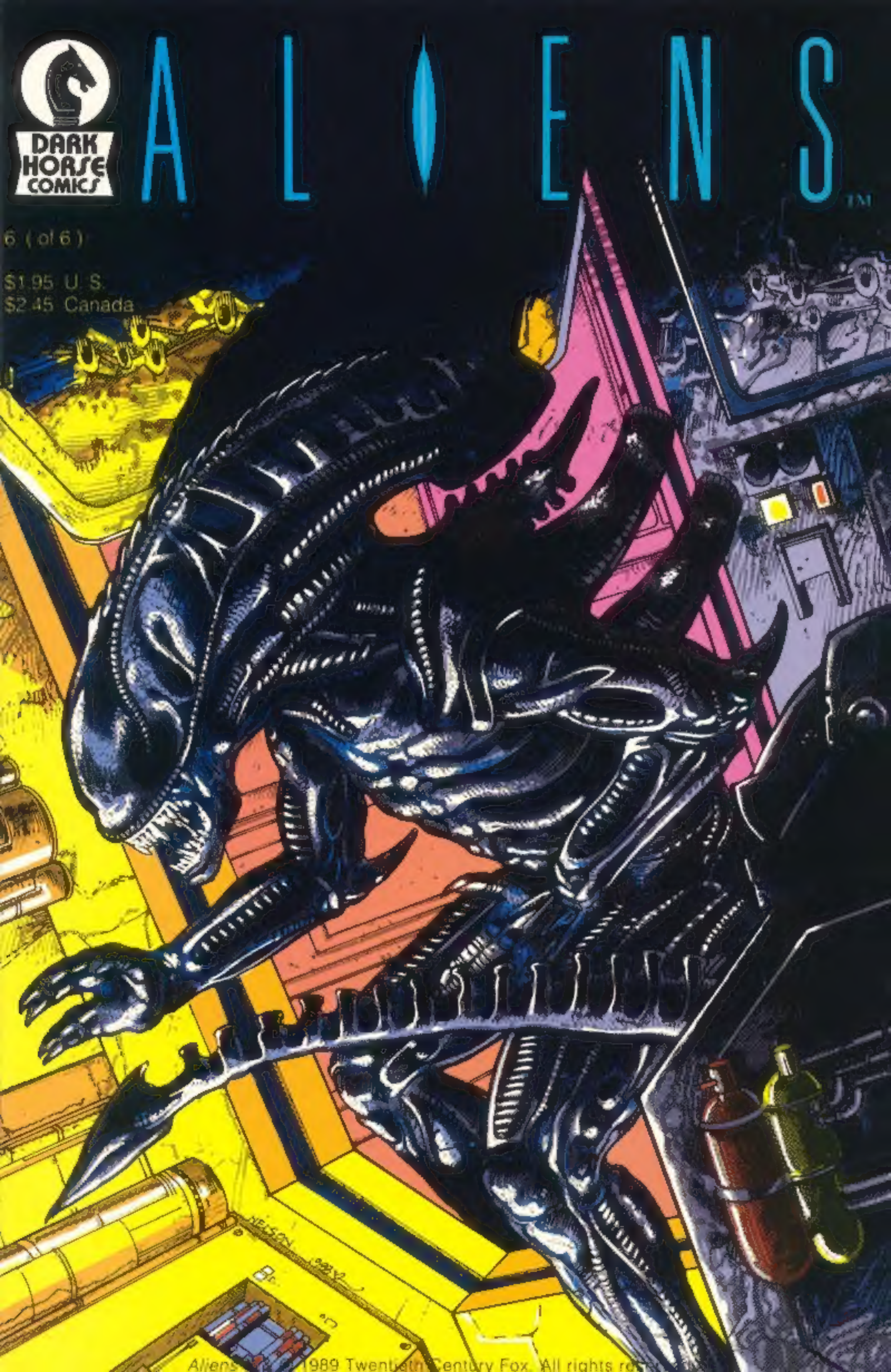

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ALIENS™

Based on characters and situations from the Twentieth Century Fox motion picture.

No. 6 (of 6) July, 1989

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IT HAD DEAD EYES, SEEING AND NOT SEEING.
IT HAD DESTROYED THE ALIENS, BUT NOT FOR US. NEVER FOR US.
WHY?
IT DIDN'T SPEAK, BUT SOMETHING EXPLODED INSIDE MY HEAD, BRIGHT LIKE A MILLION SUNS--
THE IMAGES BOILED UP FROM SOME DEEPER PLACE, THE SAME PLANE AS PRIMAL INSTINCT-- HUNGER, PAIN, FEAR--
--HATRED.
NEWT--!
I-
CAN--
SEE--

MY NAME IS REBECCA, BUT EVERYONE CALLS ME NEWT. I'M SIX YEARS OLD. I LIVE ON A WORLD CALLED ACHERON.
THERE ARE 154 OF US ON THE PLANET. THE CORPORATION CALLS US TERRAFORMERS. MY FATHER CALLS US PIONEERS.
THE CORPORATION HAD SENT US OUT TO INVESTIGATE SOME SORT OF MAGNETIC SURGE. I CAN STILL REMEMBER MY FATHER'S SMILE--THE SCENT OF MY MOTHER'S PERFUME--
THE READINGS ARE GOING OFF SCALE-- WE MUST HAVE FOUND THE MOTHER LODE--!
--AND YOU KNOW THE RULES-- WE FIND IT, WE KEEP IT.
--MY GOD.
HARD TO BELIEVE SOMETHING THIS BIG--WITH THIS KIND OF RESONANCE-- WENT WITHOUT BEING NOTICED--
IT'S PARTLY SHELTERED BY NATURAL ROCK FORMATIONS--AND THE DAMNED EC-SATS NEVER WORKED UP TO SPEC--
WHAT'S IT MATTER? IT'S OURS NOW.

MY NAME'S NEWT--I--I'M NOT SIX YEARS OLD--JESUS, IT WAS ALL SO LONG AGO. I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER. DON'T MAKE ME REMEMBER.
WIND'S REALLY KICKING UP--WE'LL MAKE A QUICK LOOP TO SECURE THE CLAIM, THEN HEAD BACK--
YOU KIDS STAY INSIDE I MEAN IT--NO FOOLING AROUND.
YOU CAN WATCH OVER THE MONITOR, BUT DON'T TOUCH.
I CAN'T STAND TO SEE IT HAPPEN AGAIN.
--MY GOD, RUSS--IT'S ENORMOUS--
OVER HERE--LOOKS LIKE SOME SORT OF GASH IN THE HULL--
I WAS ONLY SIX YEARS OLD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE DERELICT DIDN'T REALLY MEAN ANYTHING TO ME.
--THIS IS INCREDIBLE--EVERYTHING'S SMOOTH, ALMOST ORGANIC--
WE HAD TERRAFORMED A BARREN ROCK INTO A VIABLE, LIFE-SUSTAINING PLANET.
WE HAD BATTLED TIME, SPACE, THE ELEMENTS--AND WON. WE WEREN'T AFRAID.
--ANNE--
--IN HERE--!
THAT CAME LATER.
MAYBE THAT THING IN THE DERELICT SHARED OUR BLIND ARROGANCE--
--UNTIL THE ALIENS KILLED IT.

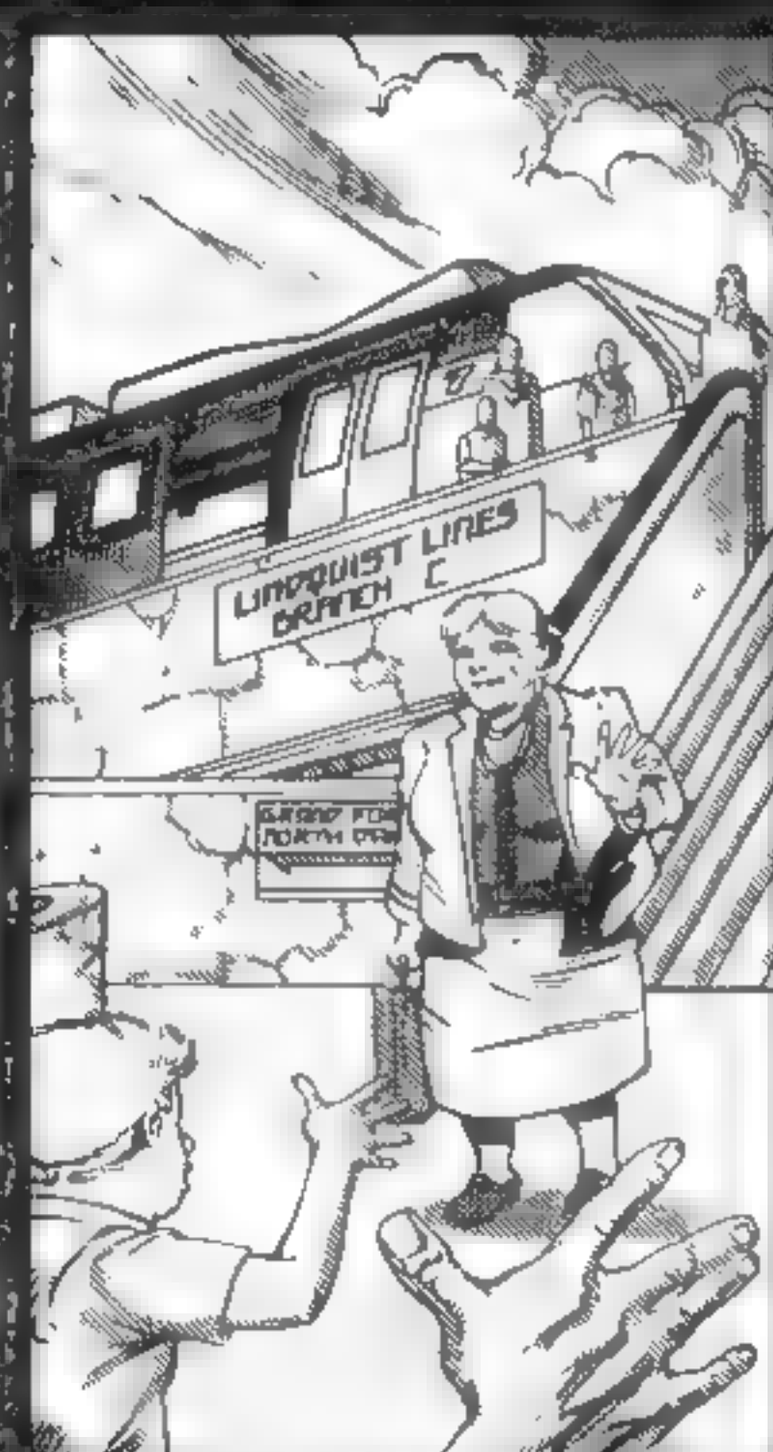
IT SOMEHOW KNEW THAT I HAD SEEN THE WRECKAGE. WE SHARED A GROTESQUE FORM OF EMPATHY--
NEWT--WHAT'S IT DOING TO YOU?
"UKKK"-- IT-WANTS ME TO KNOW--
I COULD ONLY PICK OUT BITS AND PIECES--LIKE SOMEONE BLINKING CHANNELS ON A VIDEO.
IT DESCRIBED A SHIP--SOME KIND OF MISSION--
THE EGGS--OH GOD-- THE EGGS--
DON'T--MAKE ME-- SEE IT--AGAIN--
MY NAME-- IS NEWT-- I'M SIX YEARS OLD--
--MY FATHER KNELT--IN FRONT OF THE PODS. I COULD SEE HIM OVER THE TRACTOR'S MONITOR-- I COULD SEE THE EXCITEMENT IN HIS EYES--
JESUS, ANNE, I SEE SOMETHING MOVING-- I THINK THEY'RE STILL ALI--

DADDY--NO!
DADDY--NO!
THE PILOT ABOARD THE CARGO VESSEL LOST CONTROL OF IT'S SHIP--
IT SHOULD HAVE DRIFTED FOREVER--IT SHOULD HAVE CARRIED THE ALIEN THINGS INTO THE HELL OF DEEP SPACE.
INSTEAD IT CRASHED INTO THE WORLD THAT MAN WOULD CHRISTEN ACHERON-- AND THE SPORE SURVIVED
THEY WAITED PATIENTLY FOR NEW BLOOD. THEY FOUND IT IN THE COLONISTS--MY PARENTS--
YOUR-- FRIEND--?

I COULD HEAR A HIGH PITCHED WHINE IN MY EARS, LIKE SOME DISTANT, HORRIBLE SCREAM.
THIS ANTENNA'S SHOT. WE'LL HAVE TO BYPASS IT AND RUN THE DIRECTIONALS THROUGH THE AFT SYSTEM.
MY MIND WAS SLIPPING AWAY.
WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND EVIL. IT'S AN INTANGIBLE THING--LIKE THE AIR OR THE SKY--
--AND JUST AS PERVASIVE.
I WANTED TO BELIEVE THERE WAS SOMETHING BETTER--THAT THERE WAS SOME KIND OF HOPE.
IT WATCHED US WITH IT'S DEAD EYES AND I FELT A CHILL. IT HAD COME TO THE ALIEN HOME-WORLD OUT OF HATE. IT HAD RESCUED US IN THE NAME OF REVENGE.
PERHAPS EVIL IS THE ONLY UNIVERSAL TRUTH.

EYES ONLY DOUBLE A-ALPHA LOG ON, ORONA.
I-I'VE LOST TRACK OF TIME SINCE THE BIONATIONAL ATTACK I'VE BARRICADED MYSELF IN MY OFFICE TO GIVE ME TIME TO PREPARE THIS FINAL REPORT.
EVIDENTLY THE ALIEN QUEEN IS ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN SOME SUBCONSCIOUS FASHION. WITH OTHER SPECIES. IN HUMAN BEINGS, THESE DISSEMINATIONS MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN THE FORM OF PATTERN NIGHTMARES.
THE DREAMS WERE A LURE.
AT FIRST WE THOUGHT WE'D BE ABLE TO CONTAIN THE SPORE. INFESTATION SEEMED LIMITED TO A NARROW GEOGRAPHIC RANGE.
BLAM! BLAM!
BRRRP!
AAGH--!
AND YET FOR EVERY CLUSTER WE FOUND THERE WERE TEN MORE JUST LIKE IT.
NAME'S OSTROW. LOOKS LIKE HE WAS SOME SORT OF BIG SHOT WITH BIONATIONAL.
BURN THE SON OF A BITCH.

THE ALIEN'S SUBCONSCIOUS BAIT TRANSCENDED CLASS AND POLITICAL BOUNDARIES. WE FOUND HIVES EVERYWHERE.
COME ON, MOVE IT!
I WANT A PERIMETER AROUND THE HOUSE AND I WANT AIR SUPPORT, NOW--!
WITH EACH NEW DISCOVERY, OUR HOPE OF DESTROYING THE CREATURES BEFORE THEY ENTERED THE CIVILIAN POPULATION FADED.
FOOM
HOWEVER WE STILL CONSIDERED CONTAINMENT AN OPTION. IN STUDYING THE BIONATIONAL FILES WE LEARNED THEIR QUEEN HAD GESTATED A NUMBER OF WEEKS PRIOR TO MATURATION.
USING THEIR EXPERIMENT AS A BASELINE, I ASSUMED WE STILL HAD TIME BEFORE ANY NEW QUEENS WOULD BECOME VIABLE.
BLAM BLAM BLAM
I WAS WRONG.



PERHAPS OUR WORST MISTAKE WAS UNDERESTIMATING THE SHEER INSTINCTUAL *CUNNING* OF THE CREATURES. WE DIDN'T SEE THE UNDERLYING *PATTERN* BEHIND THEIR EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS--THE WAY EVERY FACET OF THEIR EXISTANCE WAS GEARED TOWARD *PROPAGATION*. THE QUEENS MATURED AT WHATEVER SPEED THEIR *SURVIVAL* DICTATED.

WE HAD ASSUMED THE GESTATION PERIOD WAS TIME FOR THE ALIEN EMBRYO TO FEED AND GROW, BUT IT WAS MORE THAN THAT. IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE UNKNOWING *HOST* TO SPREAD IT'S *SPORE* TO OTHER SITES.

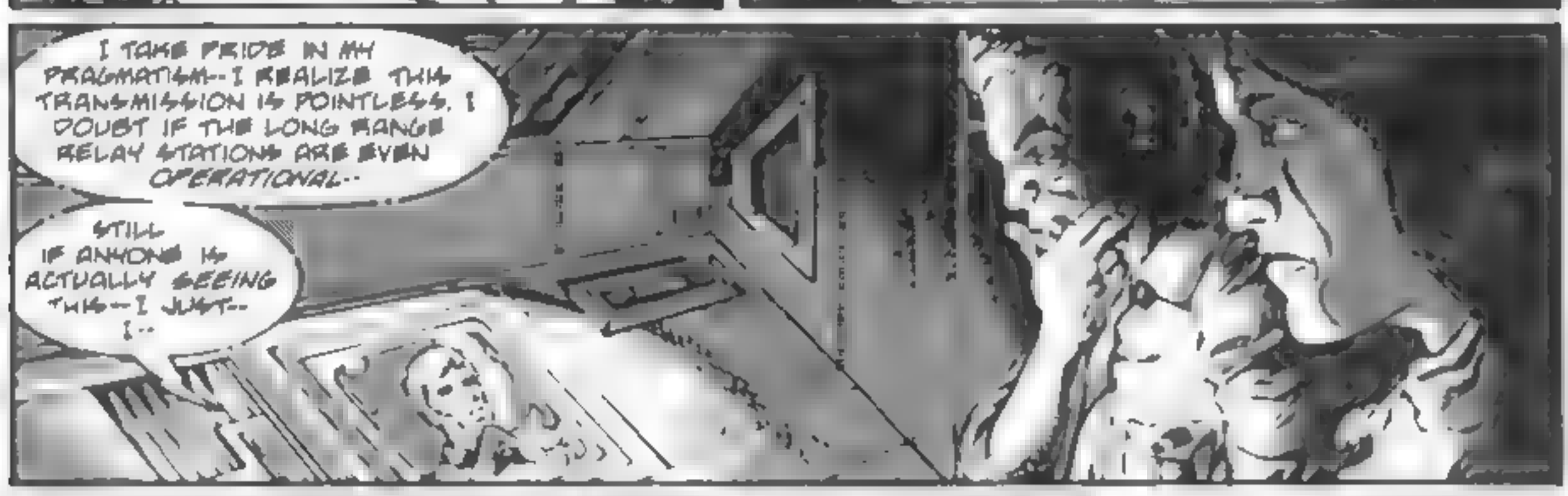
THERE WAS A GEOMETRIC PERFECTION TO THE INFESTATIONS
EACH QUEEN WOULD LAY STILL MORE QUEENS, AND WITH EVERY GENERATION THE SPORE BECAME MORE ENTRENCHED. MORE—
WHUMP
AHH AT LAST
THE CIVILIAN AUTHORITY WAS WEAK IN THE FACE OF THE DEVASTATION. WHEN THE GENERALS FINALLY STAGED THEIR COUP IT SEEMED ALMOST—WELCOME
AGHH.. YOU CAN'T DO THIS.. IT'S AGAINST THE..
SHUT UP!
322
THE MILITARY CREATED TESTING CENTERS WHERE PHYSICIANS CHECKED CIVILIANS FOR SIGNS OF THE ALIEN INFECTION. AT FIRST THE TESTS WERE VOLUNTARY.
TESTING CENTER
WITH N DAYS THAT CHANGED
THERE WERE RUMORS THE MILITARY WAS USING THE PRETEXT OF ALIEN INFECTION TO ELIMINATE POLITICAL DISSIDENTS--THE POOR THE DISAFFECTED--
AS IF SUCH PETTY RIVALRIES EVEN MATTERED

VITAL SERVICES WATER ELECTRICITY BEGAN TO FAIL
WE'VE HEARD OF INFESTATIONS IN EUROPE AUSTRALIA THE SEED IS GROWING WITH REMARKABLE SPEED
FROM ALL THIS, I'VE COME TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING ABOUT HUMANITY
MAN IS AN ANIMAL, DRIVEN BY ANIMAL PASSIONS. 'CIVILIZATION' IS A PATHETIC CHARADE OF MANNERS, PREDICATED ON A TISSUE-THIN VEIL OF LIES.
IN THE FUTURE-- IF THERE IS A FUTURE-- HISTORIANS MAY BLAME OUR FAILURES ON SOME EXTERNAL CAUSE--
- THE ALIENS EMOTIONAL FATE
I KNOW THE TRUTH THOSE THINGS DIDN'T DESTROY US
WE DO

WHAM!
THEY-- THEY'LL BE HERE SOON
THE MILITARY HAS ORGANIZED OFF-WORLD SHIPS TO EVACUATE "VITAL PERSONNEL" TO THE OUTER COLONIES--MAINLY THEIR OWN PRECIOUS HIDES.
I'VE CHOSEN TO REMAIN BEHIND.
WE MADE THE MISTAKE OF PERCEIVING THE ALIENS AS SENTIENT WARRIORS. I FINALLY REALIZED THE TRUTH. THEY'RE DISEASE. A CANCER.
IT'LL BE JUST A MOMENT, COLONEL. THE SEALS HAVE TO BE BURNED BEFORE THE OUTER DOOR--
JUST DO IT
U.S. LOA
KEEP OUT
MY--MY MOTHER DIED OF CANCER ODD HOW I'VE BEEN THINKING OF HER--
YEARS AGO, FOLLOWING SURGERY, DOCTORS WOULD APPLY RADIATION TO THE AFFECTED AREA IN HOPE OF DESTROYING ALL TRACES OF THE SCOURGE.
I'M SHOWING GREEN ON 90% OF THE WARHEADS THE BURST SHOULD VAPORIZE THE MOUNTAIN-- PREVAILING WINDS WILL DO THE REST--
IT SOUNDS SO PRIMITIVE, BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE OLD WAYS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE

I'VE TIMED THE DETONATION TO COINCIDE WITH THE MILITARY'S ESCAPE!

THEY THINK THEY CAN DESTROY THE CREATURES. THEY THINK SOMEDAY THEY'LL BE ABLE TO COME BACK TO THEIR WORLD
THERE'S SOMETHING POETIC ABOUT THE STRUGGLE AN ONLY REGRET IS THAT I WON'T SURVIVE TO SEE THEM PROVEN WRONG


I TAKE PRIDE IN MY PRAGMATISM--I REALIZE THIS TRANSMISSION IS POINTLESS. I DOUBT IF THE LONG RANGE RELAY STATIONS ARE EVEN OPERATIONAL--
STILL IF ANYONE IS ACTUALLY SEEING THIS--I JUST-- I--

DOESN'T REALLY MATTER DOES IT?
I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY FIRED ONE OF THESE--I FEEL RATHER..
SCRUNCH
..FOOLISH
OH GOD NO
CRUNCH

DAMN THEM.. DAMN THEM ALL TO HELL
THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD BREED THE MONSTERS OUT
THE MONSTERS WERE BREEDING US!
WE'VE GOT TO GO BACK
TO THOSE THINGS TO SPIT AND POLISH BASTARDS! I'M NOT SURE WHICH IS WORSE--
IT'S OVER. NEXT WE'RE HELPLESS
YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'RE HELPLESS
IT'S NOT

DESTROYING THE ALIENS HAD BEEN AN ALL CONSUMING PASSION, YET THERE WAS LITTLE SENSE OF *ACHIEVEMENT* AS WE LEFT TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE BENEDICT.

HICKS WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS BECAUSE "THE MOTIONS" WERE ALL WE HAD LEFT

THE "OTHER" WATCHED AND APPROVED, AND IN THE END, REVENGE WAS JUST ANOTHER CHEMICAL *REACTION*--LIKE *ALL* THINGS IN LIFE--

ONE INSTANT, THE HIVE WAS THERE.

THE NEXT INSTANT, IT WAS GONE

FINALLY, HICKS KNEW HE *HAD* TO GO BACK. THERE SIMPLY WASN'T ANYTHING *ELSE*

COURSE ENTERED, GRAVITY DRIVE UP--

LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

WE WERE NOTHING WHEN WE LEFT EARTH. WE'D BEEN SENT TO FIND SPECIMENS. WE WERE RETURNING WITH SALVATION.

THE WORD SEEMED HOLLOW, RIDICULOUS. WHERE WOULD I FIND AN SALVATION?

--BUTLER?

DON'T-- PLEASE--

ARE YOU--ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

PLEASE NEWT--DON'T LOOK AT ME--

I--I CAN'T I NEED TO KNOW

I NEED TO KNOW F--IF WHAT WE HAD WAS REAL

WHEN THAT--THING TORE INTO ME-- I REMEMBER THINKING HOW MUCH I LOVED YOU--

--THEN I SAW WHAT WAS LEFT--AND SUDDENLY I KNEW--

--GOD WE ALL KNEW--

HICKS SAID IT WAS JUST PROGRAMMING--PART OF SOME SOCIALIZATION PROCESS--YOU BELIEVED YOU WERE HUMAN BECAUSE IT WAS EASIER--

BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US. IT CAN'T.

IT-- CAN'T..

I--I TOUCHED HIM. HIS SKIN WAS WARM--SOFT
HE WAS ALIVE

MAYBE ALL LIFE IS LIKE HICKS REVENGE-- CHEMICAL-- RANDOM--
--HATE--DEATH--LOVE-- ALL MEANINGLESS OUTSIDE SOME LARGER CONTEXT--

--IT ALWAYS COMES BACK TO OUR ARROGANCE. THE SCIENTISTS WANT TO DRAW A LINE BETWEEN MAN AND HIS MACHINES--
NEWT--
--BUT WHAT DID IT MATTER? BUTLER CARED FOR ME. NOT LIKE HICKS--NOT LIKE EARTH'S DOCTORS--

WHAT MADE THEIR HATE MORE ALIVE THAN THEIR CREATION'S LOVE?

TIME PASSED QUICKLY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE ACHERON. I FELT A SENSE OF CALM
EARTH DRIFTED BELOW US LIKE SOME BRIGHT TOY AND AT LONG LAST WE WERE HOME
WE HAVEN'T GOT MUCH TIME. THE CREATURES HAVE BREACHED THE GALVESTON SECURITY LINE--I THOUGHT ORONA SAID--
ORONA'S DEAD..! HAPPENED WEEKS AGO-- WE FOUND WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM INSIDE THE MAIN BIO LAB--
SIR--WE'RE PICKING UP TWO SHIPS ON THE DS SCANNER-- ONE'S EMITTING A STANDARD TYPE FOUR BEACON--THE OTHER IS UNIDENTIFIED--
THE TYPE FOUR'S ASKING PERMISSION TO LAND. WE'VE CANNIBALIZED MOST OF THE TRANSCODE COMPUTERS, BUT I MANAGED TO PULL A PRELIMINARY ID.
THE BENEDICT--MY GOD-- STEPHEN'S SHIP--
GRANT PERMISSION FOR LANDING. I'LL MEET THEM AT THE PAD PERSONALLY

WIND AND RAIN BATTERED THE SHIP AS WE SETTLED ON THE LANDING PLATFORM. IT WAS ALMOST AS IF NATURE ITSELF WERE REBELLING AGAINST THE MILITARY'S PLAN.
THE RAIN REMINDED ME OF ACHERON--REMINDED ME OF MY INNOCENCE--
TAKE THE SYNTHETS TO REHAB--WE'LL DEAL WITH THEM LATER--
--ONE OF THE BIONATIONAL EXECUTIVES TOLD US ABOUT STEPHENS AFTER ALL THE SHIT CAME DOWN--
--YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THOSE BASTARDS ANY-
DAMN IT LISTEN TO ME-- ORONA TRANSMITTED A MESSAGE ABOUT THE DETONATION JUST BEFORE HE DIED. YOU HAVE TO STOP IT--

"--THERE MAY BE ANOTHER WAY--"

--WE'VE SUSPECTED THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER SENTIENT BEINGS SINCE THE NOSTROMO MISSION. IT DOESN'T CHANGE THINGS.

THE ALIENS HAVE WON, CORPORAL. BASIC MILITARY TACTICS--WHEN YOU'RE OUTGUNNED, YOU RETREAT--AND LEAVE NOTHING FOR YOUR ENEMY

JESUS--HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ANYTHING I'VE SAID? THERE'S STILL A CHANCE IF YOU'LL DEAL WITH THE--

TH-THEY DON'T WANT TO STOP IT

WHAT--?

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE ALIENS OVERRUN US--WE'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION--

ORONA UNDERSTOOD THE ALIEN ATTACK ISN'T EVIL. IT'S OPPORTUNITY--

"--EARTH'S BEEN ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION FOR DECADES. THERE'S NO *DISCIPLINE*--NO *ORDER*

"THE ALIENS ONLY *EXACERBATED* THE SITUATION. IT WOULD HAVE COME TO THIS SOONER OR LATER

"IT'S A CHANCE TO *CLEAN* THE *SLATE*-- A CHANCE TO START AGAIN--

"AFTER A FEW YEARS--WHEN IT'S OVER-- THE SURVIVORS CAN RETURN AND TERRAFORM EARTH INTO SOMETHING *BEAUTIFUL* AGAIN--

"ORONA UNDERSTOOD-- THE ALIENS HAVE GIVEN US A CHANCE TO *REDISCOVER* OURSELVES--

"IT'S A GOOD THING"

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE ACHERON, I *LAUGHED*. I LAUGHED BECAUSE *WORDS* HAD LOST THEIR MEANING-- BECAUSE THAT SON OF A BITCH ORONA HAD BEEN *RIGHT*--

--THE ALIENS *DIDN'T* DESTROY US--

--WE DID

SIR--THERE'S BEEN A BREECH OF THE SOUTHERN PERIMETER OUR SPOTTERS HAVE SEEN *HUNDREDS* OF THE--

LOCK DOWN THE SHIPS AND PREPARE FOR LAUNCH. IT'S *TIME*

AND WHAT ABOUT *US*--?

YOU DID WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS RIGHT. THE TIME FOR MILITARY PROTOCOL AND POLITE *INQUIRIES* ARE LONG PAST--

--YOU'RE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE STILL ON EARTH. *UNNECESSARY*.

--BACK AWAY-- REPORT TO THE PAD FOR LAUNCH--!
RUN!
RUN!
UNNECESSARY MY ASS
JUST LET IT END THE WAY IT SHOULD HAVE ENDED ON ACHERON-- FOR BOTH OF US--
-I'M NOT GIVING THOSE ALIEN SHITS THE PLEASURE AND NEITHER ARE YOU--
I SMUGGLED YOU ABOARD THE BENEDICT-- AND IF I'VE LEARNED ONE THING ABOUT THE MILITARY IT'S THIS--
THEY NEVER LEARN--
LEVEL 1
WAIT--!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS, NEWT--
THIS IS WHERE THEY TOOK BUTLER--I--
OH GOD-- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE--?
THEY DESTROYED THE OTHERS--TOOK WHAT THEY COULD SALVAGE--
I--I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME BACK

--HALF THESE SHIPS ARE AUTOMATED CARGO CARRIERS--NO CREW. IF WE CAN IDENTIFY A SPECIFIC-
--THAT'S IT DECK FOUR
KEEP FIRING! KEEP FIRING! WE CAN'T LET THEM GET TO THE PAD--
--WE CAN'T LE-
I'M STILL NOT SURE WHAT HICKS WAS THINKING AS WE CLIMBED ABOARD THE CARGO SHIP PERHAPS HE WASN'T THINKING AT ALL--JUST REACTING AS THE SOLDIER IN HIM TOOK OVER--
DAMN IT HURRY!
AAAGGGG--
--OR MAYBE AFTER ALL THE DEATH AND PAIN, SOMETHING FINALLY SPARKED INSIDE HIM SOMETHING PRECIOUS.
--WE GOT LUCKY MOST OF THESE CARGO JOBS HAVE BEEN RETROFITTED FOR TOTAL AUTO OPERATION. THIS ONE STILL HAS SOME MANUAL CONTROLS
--FULLY PRESSURIZED ATMOSPHERE'S NOMINAL- MAKES SENSE--
- SHIP'S REGISTER SPECIFIES ORGANIC CARGO HELL--IT'S NOAH'S HAPPY LITTLE ARK.
HAS NOT TO LIVE

--THE ALIENS HAVE ENTERED THE *FACILITY*-- PREPARE THE SHIPS FOR LAUNCH ON *MY* COMMAND--

--SIR-- SOME OF THE MEN ARE STILL ON *DECK*, MAKING FINAL--

--I'M PROUD OF EVERY ONE OF THEM. NOW PREPARE FOR LAUNCH OR I'LL HAVE YOU *SHOT*.

I COULD HEAR GUNFIRE AND *SCREAMS* AS THE ALIENS ADVANCED ON OUR SHIP. THE SOUNDS OF A PLANET DYING.

THE AUTOMATIC LAUNCH SEQUENCERS LOCKED AND THE WHINE OF THE SHIP'S ENGINES DROWNED OUT THE HORROR BELOW.

WE WERE LEAVING EARTH TO THE ALIENS AND ORONA'S 'OPPORTUNITY'--

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE CRIED-- FELT *SOMETHING* FOR THOSE WE LEFT BEHIND--BUT I'D RUN OUT OF TEARS *LONG* AGO--

--AND THEN IT *SPOKE* TO ME--

--SOMETHING EXPLODED--BRIGHT, LIKE A MILLION SUNS--
I--
CAN--
SEE--
NEWT-- WHAT'S WRONG--?
IT--IT HAD CHANGED SINCE THE HOMEWORLD IT TOOK ME A MOMENT TO FULLY COMPREHEND--
AGGHH--
IT UNDERSTOOD ABOUT ORONA-- IT KNEW HIS TWISTED PLAN--
WE THOUGHT IT SHARED OUR THIRST FOR VENGEANCE. WE LED IT TO EARTH IN THE MISTAKEN BELIEF IT MIGHT WANT TO "HELP" US.
HOW COULD WE HAVE BEEN SO BLIND? IT SHARED SO MANY OF OUR MERCURIAL HUMAN EMOTIONS. HATE. ANGER.
IT JUST WANTED ME TO KNOW.
THE DESIRE TO CONQUER.
IT NO LONGER CARED ABOUT THE ALIENS. INTEREST HAD SHIFTED. THE SOLDIERS ASSUMED THEY WOULD RETURN ONE DAY AND TERRAFORM EARTH FOR THEMSELVES--
IT WOULD WATCH. IT WOULD BE WAITING FOR THEM.

THE CARGO VESSEL'S NAVIGATIONAL COMPUTERS WERE LOCKED ONTO A DEEP SPACE TRAJECTORY. THE GRAVITY DRIVE PULSED LIKE A LIVING THING, PROPELLING US ACROSS BILLIONS OF MILES OF SPACE.
HICKS FINALLY HAD HIS REVENGE, BUT HE FOUND NO SATISFACTION IN IT.
WHEN IT BEGAN, HE BLAMED HIS MISERY ON THE ALIENS. NOW ALL HE COULD BLAME WAS HIMSELF.
I WAS STANDING AT ONE OF THE VIEWPORTS, STARING INTO SPACE. THE LIGHT FROM THE STARS STRETCHED AROUND THE SHIP LIKE GLOWING WHITE NEON--
--BUT THIS TIME IT WAS DIFFERENT.
I WASN'T ALONE ANYMORE-- AND MAYBE, FINALLY, THAT WAS ALL THAT MATTERED.